

arising from a trivial offense,* separated, not very long ago from the main body of the Déné nation and were adopted by the Blackfeet, an Algonquian tribe, among whom they have since lived, while keeping their linguistic autonomy. They do not number more than 100 souls.

An ethnologic problem which is not yet, and will perhaps never be solved, is the question, How did it come to pass that large portions of the Déné nation detached themselves from the main stock and migrated south? When did this exodus occur? What was the route followed by the adventurous bands? The man is probably yet unborn who will satisfactorily answer these questions. It may be that the interested tribes have some legends or traditions which might throw some light on the subject; but I think this is hardly the case.† As far as the northern Dénés are concerned, they do not even suspect the existence of any kinsmen south of the Tsiikoh'tins' territory. Two facts only seem pretty safely established, namely: the separation of the southern from the northern tribes happened centuries ago; and, moreover, the national movement resulting in the division of the nation into two different camps was from north to south. The first assertion is proven by the fact that "when the Spaniards first met them [the Navajos] in 1541, they were tillers of the soil, erected large granaries for their crops, irrigated their fields by artificial water-courses or *acequias*, and lived in substantial dwellings, partly underground."‡ In support of the second statement, I need only refer to a tradition current among some western tribes according to which "days were formerly exceedingly short; so short indeed that sewing the edge of a muskrat skin was all that one woman could do between sunrise and sunset." This unmistakably points to the arctic regions as places of previous residence.

Unknown to themselves, important branches of the great Déné tree thrive thousands of miles away from the parental stem. As far as I can ascertain from the latest and most reliable source§ available, they are, or were until recently:—

* According to Mr. W. E. Traill, an H. B. Co's officer who has passed many years in close proximity to the Sarcees, this separation was caused by the following circumstances: A party of Tse'kehne were target shooting when a dog happened to take on the arrow planted in the ground as a target one of those liberties of which the canine gent is so fond. Thereupon the dog was shot by the possessor of the arrow, upon which that of the shooter was killed by the master of the original offender. Then followed numerous reprisals which could only be stopped by the voluntary departure of one band of related families which became the Sarcees.

† The above had been written for some time, when I read in Dr. Brinton's *American Race* that "the Navajos have no reminiscence of their ancestral home in the North."

‡ Brinton's *American Race*, p. 72, citing A. A. Bandelier "Indians of the Southwestern U. S."

§ 60th Annual Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1891.